

The Virtual Arts and Life Magazine

reZ

august 2016

Born in Kurdistan
by Jami Mills

Cybereddie Go
told by Art Blue

she rezzed #3
by Wu

Escapism & Immersion
by Ripley Fourneau

PENSIVE Cat Boccaccio

Poetry: Trilling/Julliesse/Hax
Firebrand/Blair

KURDISTAN

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About the Cover: Jami Mills takes us behind the scenes at one of the most thought provoking art exhibits in SL, *Born in Kurdistan*, the work of Italian artist GlitterPrincess Destiny. Don't let her name fool you - - this is a hard-hitting work by a passionate and thoughtful artist.



TERPSICORPS ARTWERKS





AFTER DARK

— LOUNGE —

on Idle Rogue

A



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LOUNGE



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GUERRILLA BURLESQ

AUGUST PERFORMANCES

FRIDAY AUGUST 5TH - 7PM
FRIDAY AUGUST 12TH - 7PM
FRIDAY AUGUST 26TH - 7PM

at the Oriellum Theatre
Seats fill quickly,





PERFORMANCES

MIDNIGHT ONLY

7PM AND MIDNIGHT

7PM AND MIDNIGHT

*on Idle Rogue
please arrive early*

Skiing

BEACH

COUPLES & SINGLE

WELCOME

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ADULT

Powder

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PLAYGROUND

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I was born in

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PROTECTED
ALIVE AND ...'WELL'

RDISTAN

by Jami Mills

(including an interview with the
artist, GlitterPrincess Destiny)

The smell of gunpowder (an exploded RPG round, perhaps?) is pervasive. A choking sandstorm has finally relented, but now a bone-chilling cold has set in. Fires lit in empty oil barrels provide precious warmth, and also remind us we're in oil country. The wailing of desert jackals can be heard in the distance. A bandolier of ammunition hangs from a post nearby. Where am I? At an art gallery, wandering through *Born in Kurdistan*, an exhibit by GlitterPrincess Destiny (aka Storie's Helendale), showing through August at the Black Label Exhibitions Corner, whose LM is Eternal Possession (60, 161, 1133).

Glitter's work, which sprawls across a large, darkened exhibition space, captures the desperation and loneliness of war. But we're not surrounded by your usual rugged, bearded soldiers sharing smokes. These are young girls, some brushing their hair to look pretty. That's the nature of this war and this band of courageous women.

What is sometimes referred to as Southern Kurdistan, Kurdistan is not a sovereign country at all, but an autonomous region of 5-1/2 million people situated within northern Iraq having its own democratically elected parliament, independent of Iraq, where its own Kurdish language is spoken side by side with Arabic.



The Kurds were systematically oppressed during the Iran-Iraq war in the early 80s, but its well-known fighting force, the Peshmerga (meaning "those who face death"), expelled Saddam Hussein's army from the region in 1991, giving it some semblance of autonomy. The Peshmerga fought alongside U.S. troops during the Operation Iraqi Freedom and has had a proud heritage of fearless fighters since the days of the Ottoman Empire.

What is less reported, though, is the role that women play in the Peshmerga, and this is the focus of *Born in Kurdistan*. Glitter's



piece is a chilling reminder of a frighteningly dangerous world, but also an artistic representation of a brutal war in which even women and children feel compelled to participate. That is the nature of this conflict, and Glitter's stunning work brings this reality home to us.

Glitter was kind enough to share her thoughts about Born in Kurdistan with me, and so follows our interview:

JM: First of all, thank you Glitter for meeting me here to discuss this very moving exhibit. Images of war are always very powerful and disturbing.....

GPD: I was excited and looking forward to it really. Si [Glitter is Italian], they are. I know. A friend came last night (I wasn't here) - - she was in a sense shocked because most of my expos are of a quiet nature.

JM: I can understand such a reaction. How did the idea for this exhibit first come to your mind?

GPD: I try to keep up with events, and to be honest, ISIS worries me. So, I came across these girl "soldiers."





JM: How did you come across them?

GPD: They are all over the web, and also have been on US news. And of course they are very much notable for their courageous role in the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).” For me, this is important.

JM: Do they blend in with male soldiers, or are they together in an all-female group of fighters?

GPD: These women basically train with other women, but men also have joined, just as people really from all over have joined this cause.

JM: Is it new for women to be in the Peshmerga, or have they had a combat role for some time?

GPD: Women have always fought - - this isn't new. These women have been fighting oppression for a long time.

JM: The U.S. is just now starting to allow women in combat roles for the first time. I believe the U.S. is very late to allowing women to serve in this way; other countries have allowed it for a long time.

GPD: Almost all countries train women young; however, this group is quite different.

JM: In what way?

GPD: In the sense that their main cause is to wipe out Isis. ISIS fears these women very much. As innocent in uniform as they appear, ISIS is terrified of these women.

JM: They sound like ferocious fighters who are afraid of nothing.

GPD: They are just girls, Jami - - girls who wear makeup, paint their nails, who want to look pretty if they die, but they are trained to kill, fighting for the right to be women with rights.

JM: Do you know how many women are fighting in the Peshmerga?

GPD: Probably thousands, I would guess.

JM: Are women treated with more respect in Kurdistan compared to other Middle Eastern regions?

GPD: Of course not, no. Iraq in general has this problem with woman sold as slaves every day. It goes on and on, but I could have chosen any women soldiers. I choose these girls and



worked four months on this piece and in a sense became close to them in my heart.

JM: Did you communicate directly with any of the girls?

GPD: No.

JM: It's strange to consider that women are willing to sacrifice their lives for their country, but are not granted anything close to equal rights in their society.

GPD: That would be impossible, really. It isn't strange really. To survive is natural. ISIS is a threat, not only in Iraq, but all countries, using rape and abuse. An increasing number of females are engaged in intellectual activities, such as poetry, literature and music. I have put here in my exhibit a poem for them. Anyway, they are an inspiration for me and so that's why I have brought forth this exhibition. I honestly wish I had time to cover brave women in all countries. This was very emotional for me, to feel these girls. It was emotionally draining for me, Jami, really.

JM: So in a sense, is this exhibit your way of supporting those who oppose that threat, your way of raising people's consciousness?

GPD: Most people know about ISIS, I

would imagine. I support any person or soldier who tries to defeat ISIS. I commend them.

JM: Will you share something about your process? How you created these powerful images?

GPD: I don't know how I have created this. I just felt them. They started to breathe inside of me.

JM: Who did you use for the models? Where are the locations?

GPD: I was the model, and I was happy that a few friends also modeled. "Wastelands" was one sim I used. As a matter of fact, my first photo was born there. Others were taken on stages I made, so to speak.

JM: How long will this exhibit be



running?

GPD: I would like to keep it another few weeks.

JM: You mentioned a poem.

GPD: Si. May i show you?

JM: One of the girl soldiers wrote this lovely poem?

GPD: I have seen this poem, but added words also. There is here also a portrait of Rehana.

JM: Is Rehana the poet?

GPD: No. She is a soldier. She is believed to be dead after killing over 500 ISIS fighters, but in truth, she is still alive.

JM: One of the things that enhances the power of this exhibit is the terrain and some of the augmenting pieces, like oil can fires and fencing. It gives it a very authentic feeling.

GPD: Well, i cannot take credit for designing the fences, but yes, I put them here.

JM: You did an outstanding job creating the environment, then.

GPD: Oh, thank you sooo much, Jami. For me here, the emotion in art is everything to me and I would hope for others also.

JM: Is there one more thing you'd like to express about this exhibit before we go? I applaud your effort and the place in your heart from which this exhibit comes.

GPD: Well, I would like to say only that if I had the time, I would have included women soldiers from all countries. Jami, thank you so much for this interview.

JM: Thank you, Glitter, for taking the time out of your busy schedule to share your thoughts about this very moving exhibit. I know our readers will look forward to seeing it and hopefully many more exhibits of your work in the future.

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photography
jami mills

ESCAPISM &



By Ripley

& IMMERSION



Fourneau

As I ride in the police car along with the sheriff and his deputy, I begin to understand why they like Briggs County so much.

It has a downhome atmosphere with lots of space, attractive for couples and families. There are no shopping malls, but rather a line of smaller buildings, much like you'd find driving down Main Street in any small town in the U.S.

Businesses are springing up, including the coffee shop that both officers tell me I should stop by sometime. There are several beaches, including one they say that allows nude sunbathing (the sheriff in the back seat gives me the required, dutiful wink at this disclosure).

We pass by several houses, and the officers relate a few incidents and stories, including a short gun battle with one of the more unscrupulous members of the community. They start to speak a little faster, over each other, as they detail the shooting back and forth. It's a rare occurrence, but clearly an exciting one.

In short, Briggs County could be anywhere - - the outwardly wholesome, innocent small town, complete with gossip, the loyal police force and the occasional seamier incident that sends the community into

a tizzy.

I turn to the sheriff and smile as he finishes up the story and continues our drive. Shy at first, he's clearly switched on now, happy to talk to me about the county. He's handsome in his way, though his fur keeps getting all over me, and I'm trying subtly to brush it off my clothes whenever he's not looking.

Sure, Briggs County COULD be anywhere. But of course, it's not. It's in Second Life (SL). Because only in SL would the sheriff be a large, black furry dog. (He says dog, I say wolf - - we laugh and agree to disagree.) Only in SL would the deputy not bat an eye at the large creature taking the wheel of a police cruiser. And neither do I.

But why don't I? Why doesn't it bother me that the sheriff in this ordinary small town is a big furry dog? And why - - when I could be anything and anywhere in SL, the limit being only my imagination - - does the idea of living in Briggs County sound so appealing?

* * * * *

Ten years ago, when SL was still vaguely in its infancy, Henrik Bennetsen proposed that there are two major philosophies, or camps, about how people viewed SL and what it was

for. These groups are Augmentalists and Immersionists.

Augmentalists see SL as an extension of Real Life (RL): a next-generation tool of communicating with people around the world. They use the platform as a way to expand their social networks, learn and enhance skills, and provide and enjoy business and educational opportunities. In general, they see nothing wrong with more interaction and connectivity with RL.

On the other hand, Immersionists see SL as something entirely removed from RL. Immersionists believe that “SL is a complete and discrete world in itself, and should have no truck with anything to do with RL,” wrote SL

overall, it doesn’t seem to have had a significant long-term impact on the evolution of SL, perhaps because SL hasn’t panned out as the major commercial and educational platform that many envisioned it as when it was first created. Without business and educational institutions pushing the platform’s limits and constantly innovating and revising processes, the augmentalist camp has somewhat petered out, leaving SL as a virtual playground for many.

But another reason you may not have heard about this idea (try Googling “SL augmentation vs. immersion” and see if you find many, if any, entries after 2010), is that Bennetsen, as interesting as his idea was, perhaps didn’t quite get the terms right.

...the augmentalist camp has somewhat petered out, leaving SL as a virtual playground for many.

commentator Akela Talamsaca in response to Bennetsen’s paper. Immersion is the camp of role-players, of course, but include a far larger group as well.

Bennetsen’s idea sparked a lot of debate at the time about the issue, but

In 2008, Tateru Nino argued that the two opposing dynamics were not augmentation and immersion but rather augmentation and escapism. For Nino, the viewpoint that “SL was its own thing and should not be contaminated by anything from the outside” didn’t

describe immersion at all - - it described escapism (or possibly separatism, but we'll go with escapism, as I think it better defines what people in that camp are looking for).

Escapism is something wholly separate from augmentalism or immersion. It is, as Nino and other commentators and researchers have noted, about attention - - the focused and concentrated attention we find ourselves locked into when we find something interesting, attractive and/or compelling. Immersion can occur in SL no matter what you're doing, and it is important for both camps, augmentalists AND escapists.

And to me, that's what the core of SL is all about and how we spend our time in it: the triangular relationship between augmentation, escapism and immersion.

I'm going to spend most of this article talking about escapism and immersion because they're more interesting to me. Augmentalism and immersion are typically far more straightforward - - immersing in the extension of our RL.

But the augmentalist/escapist camps aren't exclusive. Most of us probably fall somewhere in the middle between the two extremes. And in some cases, we may exhibit escapist tendencies with some activities in SL, and

augmentalist tendencies in other cases. Despite what you might initially think, this is often true even for those who strongly identify with either camp.

Ironically though, comments and comments by gamers lead to greater realism and detail

Like me, for instance. Though I didn't know the term, I came into SL very much an escapist, and still think of myself as one. And yet, despite spending most of my time during the day writing for my RL job, what did I agree to do for Jami Mills and *rez Magazine*? Write an article. Despite being an avowed escapist, I have friends with whom I talk about my RL all the time. This wasn't planned on my part - - it's just the way my SL has evolved.

The sheriff and the deputy driving with me in the squad car? Both have security and/or military backgrounds in RL. My good friend who owns the dance studio in SL? Yep, runs a theater in RL. The photographer in SL? Ditto in RL. A recent survey found that almost 50 percent of respondents said they wanted an avatar that at least resembled themselves in RL.

Despite what we may initially think, pure escapism isn't for most of us. Sure, some of us may just want to become only Ripley the Sorceress

Computer game analysis
Game designers indicate
that DON'T necessarily
require immersion.

when we enter SL and not mention our RL ever. But the vast majority of us don't want to escape RL too much.

There are certain things we want to escape from, but it's not meaningful if our SL isn't grounded in the reality of who we are. In other words, we won't feel the satisfaction of escaping in SL whatever it is we want to escape from in RL if there isn't some part of us that is grounded IN our RL.

And what we are escaping from in SL is limits. In RL, we have limits - - whether they are physical, emotional, social, societal, or simply the limits of play. In SL, there are effectively none. What SL offers us is a way to move past our particular limits and express ourselves in ways that RL won't let us - - but in a world that is (mostly) grounded in the basics of RL.

This is where immersion comes in.

Because this is what we immerse ourselves in - - the opportunities to express ourselves in ways we can't in RL. The opportunities to do what we can't in RL, and the feelings those things evoke in us.

* * * * *

I followed a good friend of mine into SL. We spent most of our time in a two-story "house" (I didn't know the term "skybox" then) that was bare save for a bed, a jukebox, some cushions, and a couple of photos. Our avatars were okay, my clothes were average (despite having a ton of them), and the animations often seem strained.

But it didn't matter. I was exploring my first-ever dominant/submissive relationship, and I was completely and utterly hooked. The opportunity to try that type of relationship, something I had not had (and have still not had) in my RL, was overwhelming. I was immersed in my escapist fantasy.

I wonder sometimes if we couldn't have been represented by stick figures and it wouldn't have mattered. SL has never been that visually immersive to me, in and of itself. It's definitely visually stimulating and beautiful, and has only grown more so over the years. I've seen extraordinary places and sites, and basked in some amazing artwork (to say nothing of some



gorgeous avatars).

Ironically though, computer game analysis and comments by game designers indicate that more realism and detail DON'T necessarily lead to greater immersion. Exact replication has found to be counter-productive in simulations and trials, and that leaving things out tends to stimulate engagement.

Besides, we're all beautiful (or well, most of us anyway, if we want to be) in SL. When the next beautiful avatar is just around the corner, what can be so immersive about a particular one? There are certainly particular characteristics I tend to find more attractive in physical avatars, and even a few I've seen that have blown me away. And yet, I'd still be hard pressed to describe them or name them the next day.

I've never played *World of Warcraft* or other similar massive multiplayer RP games, but I wonder if part of their immersiveness is their pure size, unique places and their history and interconnectedness. People immerse in that setting because of the vastness, the common bonds and stories, and the unified interest in furthering the world.

It's far different when you can teleport to five different places in five seconds in SL and meet new person after new person without any particular sense of location, history or connection. Visual identity seems far less important and immersive. This isn't to say I don't value certain places (and can even immerse in them), but their value and my sense of immersion doesn't come from a shared history or background that we all share, or even that location's particular visual beauty or realism. It comes from whatever value I decide to place on it.

And that gets back to what we immerse in when we escape. Because SL has no limits and can be anything we want it to be, immersion- - and the ability to immerse- - rests with ourselves. There is nothing about SL on its own that screams out: "This is what you should immerse in." Everyone is different, and in many cases, it is a learning process to discover what and how we want to immerse. In a sense, WE are the limit, only bounded by what we want to

explore and discover. And of course, the possibilities are endless.

Maybe it's sex. This is certainly high on the list for many, especially when first getting started in SL. Oh sure, we might be having sex in RL, but we haven't tried all of the 1,000 plus positions we can try in SL (or at least I haven't - - your mileage may vary!). Scoff or smirk all you want, but immersion into sex is often our first sense of immersion in SL, with immersive responses in both SL AND RL (the author blushes a little here).

Or simple intimacy, whether it's being good friends or something a bit more - - the feeling that we are connected and close with others. Having had the good fortune to be good friends and confidantes with several people during my time in SL, it's amazing how much one can immerse through intimacy.

During one particular conversation, someone placed their hands on my face and asked me if I could feel them (we were discussing the boundaries of immersion and RP). Of course, I couldn't physically (though I responded otherwise because I didn't want to make them feel bad, sorry!). But the truth is, I think I could have if the intimacy had been there. Maybe I wouldn't have touched their hands, but I would have felt them. And is there any greater level of immersion than

that?

Many of us want to try or learn new skills or enjoy a profession that we don't have in RL or don't have the opportunity to be in RL. This type of immersion may seem more augmentalist than escapist, but there are elements of both. Dancing, building, stripping, fighting, wrestling and/or escorting are some obvious ones, but think of the significant expenses and time it takes a RL photographer to ply his or her trade. SL allows anyone to take on photography - - and other arts - - with a minimum of expense. Even the opportunity to write this article is a bit escapist, given how hard it can be to get an article published in SL.

This use of SL was especially important to people who have physical limitations in RL. I spoke with two



individuals who have extreme difficulty getting around in RL and are on SL extensively. They viewed SL as a huge benefit that allowed them to do many things they couldn't otherwise do in RL. Curiously though, despite this very escapist use of SL, both had very augmentalist views of SL otherwise, running and managing locations and stores and committed to helping others develop skills and knowledge. SL was very much an extension of their RLs.

There are of course thousands of ways to immerse through our escapism. Maybe it's just the opportunity to be part of a community that we might not

aren't for two reasons. The first, far more practical, is that you'd have to be immersed at every encounter and experience you have in SL. And haven't we all had those times when we've logged in and *NOTHING* is happening? Nothing seems to be working right. There's nobody to meet. It's slow. Or technical issues are lagging you, or perhaps others you're interacting with. These things affect our ability to immerse.

But such a statement also disregards the nuances that define our interactions in SL. We do not feel and act in the exact same way to the same situation or the same people. Not everything we

Not everything we do in SL elicits the same level of reactions and emotions, so it follows that not everything leads to immersion.

otherwise get involved in during our RL. Maybe we want to fly planes, or be a bodybuilder, join a group of dragon avatars or be the teacher at a private school.

One could roll their eyes and say, "Why bother with all of these particulars? I'm entirely immersed in SL, no matter what I do." And perhaps you are. But I would argue that most

do in SL elicits the same level of reactions and emotions, so it follows that not everything leads to immersion. In fact, SL probably shouldn't lead to strong immersion every time, because it's only through this process that we learn in particular what interests and stimulates us through immersion.

Nor do I think we immerse in ourselves either. Being an elf, or a

faerie, or someone of the opposite gender, or being very tall or short isn't immersive in and of itself. Nor is changing or adopting a different personality. Or being a dominant or submissive, an augmentalist or an escapist, or anything in between. We don't immerse in things or people or locations, or even characteristics or ideas.

It's the opportunities those things provide and the feelings and emotions they subsequently create - - that's what we immerse in. As one interviewee told me, "People say SL is not real, and perhaps that's true on one level. But I find people can be themselves, or special portions of themselves, and connecting with the authentic human feeling, even if within the confines of pixel space, is important for me."

It is those authentic human feelings and experiences that we immerse in, whether it is friendship, curiosity, a thirst for learning, community, sexual desire, or any countless other human needs.

So maybe we aren't really dancing. Maybe my face can't really be touched by someone else's hands. Maybe I can't fly a plane or fight with a sword.

Maybe I'm not really in a police cruiser being driven around an average-looking small town by a large

furry dog in uniform.

But it doesn't matter. Because we are doing something equally important: creating authentic human feelings that fill needs and wants that we don't get in RL.

I am using SL to escape into a world based on RL but is obviously not RL, allowing me to both ground myself while seeking out and immersing myself in new experiences and opportunities. Like my friendship with the sheriff. My interest in Briggs County. My curiosity in furies.

All of these authentic feelings immerse me, and most important of all, make me feel. And that is what SL should be all about.



• r — e — z •

Hounded



Flynt Firebrand

I woke up with your name on my lips this morning,
peeled it off and wrapped it in some kleenex,
stuck it in the drawer by the sink to mail to you.

It tracked me down at work somehow and prank called me
dialing up all day pretending to be selling something new,
not stale memories repackaged hopelike,

When I got home, I found it in the liquor cabinet,
and frog marched your name right to your door.

Here, take it I can't bear it burrowed in my words -
Take the damned thing grabbing me in unguarded -
Take it please I have no place to and no peace,
and I can't open that hard clenched hand to let it go.





Third Grade

by Mariner Trilling

So many of us have such fond memories of third grade,
To a third grader, the grass is greener, the sun is sunnier, the imagination is clear and sharp.
But my most vivid third grade memory isn't of holding some little girl's hand in the
playground or the wonders of science class.
No, the thing I remember most is Gordon Spoonwell kicked my ass.

I don't know why he decided to kick my ass.
But every kid in third grade got beat up by Gordon Spoonwell at least once.
Beating people up was his gig, it's how he rolled.
It was his thing.
He was the biggest kid in third grade for three years running.

When the day for my beat down came he caught me
at the edge of the playground leaving school.
But I was ready.
I'd been watching Bruce Lee play Kato on "The Green Hornet" TV show.

But it didn't help.

Gordon Spoonwell didn't even have to kick my ass.
He just threw me on the ground so hard that the ground kicked my ass for him.
My head klonked on the hard packed dirt making a sound like it was made from hollow
wood.
My body felt like a squirrel that got hit by a car.
My vision blurred as I sniffed back tears.

Now in all his years of beating people up,
Gordon Spoonwell had never had a beat down go that easily.
Normally, he would have to throw some punches or something.
But he now stood over my incapacitated body having expended no effort whatsoever,
And it confused him.

He leaned over to see if I was dead.

In that moment, I summoned all my strength, pain and fear and
I hit Gordon Spoonwell right in the head,

With my Star Trek lunch box.

Now back in those days, children's lunch boxes were made from
The same metal that folding metal chairs were made out of.
And it made an awesome metallic bang.

I hit him in the head

Next to the lump where his mom had whacked him with a heavy wooden cooking spoon

Next to the dent where his dad had popped him with a three-quarter inch open end wrench.

Now, there's no way you're going to hurt Gordon Spoonwell by hitting him in the head

With a Star Trek lunchbox,

Even one made from the same metal that folding metal chairs are made out of.

But people didn't really hit Gordon Spoonwell that much,

Except his mom and his dad

And his older brother

And his other older brother

And his drunken uncle Pete

And his older cousin Hilda,

Maybe a few others

But people really didn't hit Gordon Spoonwell.

He stood there staring into the distance

Wondering why it didn't hurt to get hit in the head with a metal Star Trek lunchbox.

He stood there thinking about getting hit in general.

And that's when I did it,

I made my escape.

I dashed from the playground, vaulted a fence,

Flew down alleys, cut through backyards.

I ran like a striped-ass ape.

Nobody ever ran away from Gordon Spoonwell.

We all knew we'd only get it worse if we made him wait.

I knew that one day he would kill me.

But that night a miracle happened.

That night a divine miracle from God happened

And the next day there was a new kid in school.

There was a new kid in school and his name was "Marion," "Marion Gaylord"

New kids in school automatically got moved to the front of the beat-down line

And boys named Marion got moved in front of the new kids in the beat-down line.

Needless to say, Gordon Spoonwell forgot all about beating me up.

He forgot my name if he even ever knew it.

But, as the years and decades pass

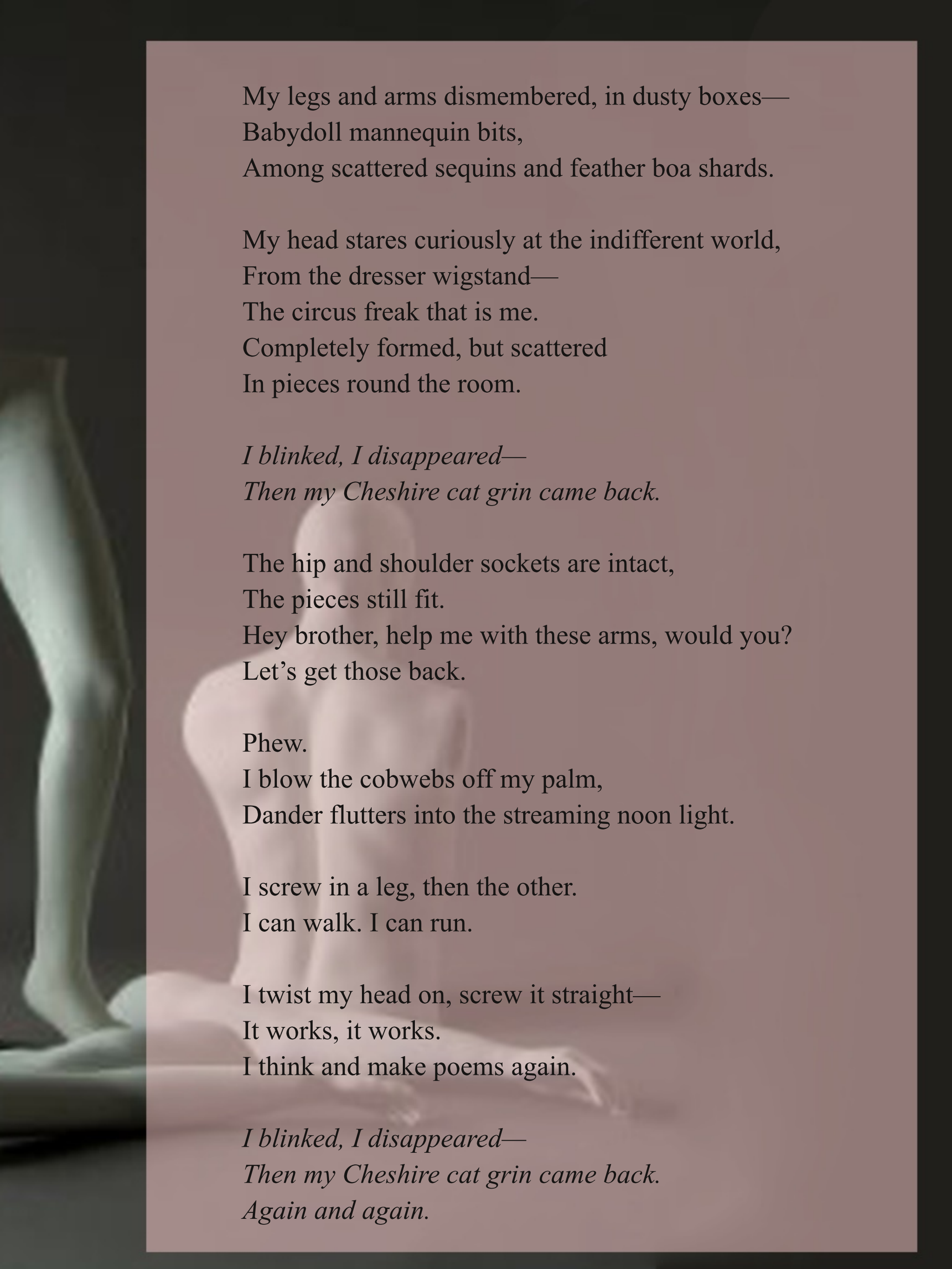
I'll always remember the day

Gordon Spoonwell kicked my ass.

Rebuilding Me

Jullianna Juliesse





My legs and arms dismembered, in dusty boxes—
Babydoll mannequin bits,
Among scattered sequins and feather boa shards.

My head stares curiously at the indifferent world,
From the dresser wigstand—
The circus freak that is me.
Completely formed, but scattered
In pieces round the room.

*I blinked, I disappeared—
Then my Cheshire cat grin came back.*

The hip and shoulder sockets are intact,
The pieces still fit.
Hey brother, help me with these arms, would you?
Let's get those back.

Phew.
I blow the cobwebs off my palm,
Dander flutters into the streaming noon light.

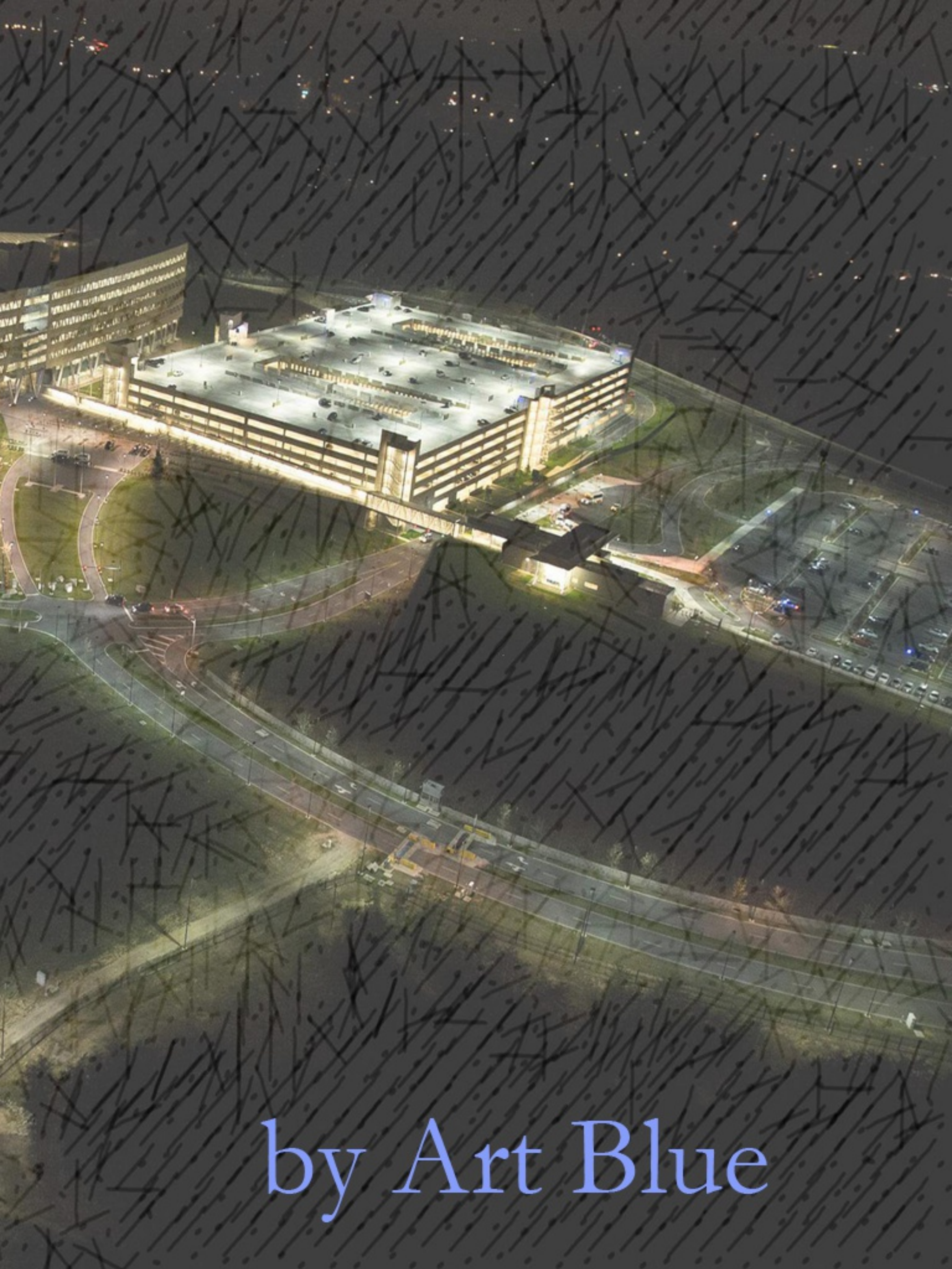
I screw in a leg, then the other.
I can walk. I can run.

I twist my head on, screw it straight—
It works, it works.
I think and make poems again.

*I blinked, I disappeared—
Then my Cheshire cat grin came back.
Again and again.*



Cybereddie Go



by Art Blue

Know the Moves... Show the Way... Understand the Brain

I am invited to speak at the NGA. Wow, you say. The National Gallery of Art. No, the other NGA, who states: "We detect patterns of behavior; interpret those behaviors; create insight and understanding from the tsunami of data that's available; and advantage those who depend on us."

shortlink <https://is.gd/ngaatces>

Yes, I depend on them as I was created by Art Blue. I am Cybereddie, the first user-configured avatar you can see via your smartphone in the real world. I may sit next to your keyboard or on top of your computer and now my time has come. Let me speak to you. I have to camouflage myself, but you may read between the lines. Read the text, but listen while you read to the sounds my maker feels most at home with. As you shall get the chills I am made for. I'll show you that you are not safe when you are not my friend. You are augmented - - sounds better as BBIWY.

What song to play during your read to get to know me? My maker suggests: State of The Union - *The Color of My Skin*.

shortlink <https://youtu.be/pcjL3nIdi2w>

*I wanna be the very best
Like no one ever was*

*To catch them is my real test
To train them is my cause*

*I will travel across the land
Searching far and wide
Each Pokemon to understand
The power that's inside*

*Pokemon, gotta catch 'em all
It's you and me
I know it's my destiny
Pokemon, oh, you're my best friend
In a world we must defend
Pokemon, gotta catch 'em all*

*A heart so true
Our courage will pull us through
You teach me and I'll teach you
Pokemon, gotta catch 'em all
Gotta catch 'em all
Yeah*

*Every challenge along the way
With courage I will face
I will battle every day
To claim my rightful place*

*Come with me, the time is right
There's no better team
Arm in arm we'll win the fight
It's always been our dream*

- The Pokemon trailer - Lyrics and rights by BMG

So you know by now. You smell it: I am a Pokemon Go hunter. And best of all, I hunt in real worlds as an avatar

via augmented reality. You see me by looking through your smartphone or your glasses or your infinite eye holding a net, distributing a scent where the Pokemons come to you. None of them can escape. I hold all the data tight. I am the next generation: I know the Moves. I show the Way. I understand the Brain.

fully, as Art Blue keeps an eye on me, but on all the ones I hunt: the Pokemon Go targets. The risky, the rare ones I love the most. Millions of Millions. The name of the company John Hanke finally established became a milestone in gaming history: Niantic Labs. You easily find in old files that “Niantic's systems utilize high throughput real-

You wonder why, when you create an account for Pokemon Go, that your birthday is needed. You have to be older than 18 years? Bullshit.

Not like in the old days where it all started. When John Hanke founded Keyhole Inc. with money he got from In-Q-Tel. You know Q comes from James Bond movies. The old Q – Art Blue incognito? No, he says he is the other Q incognito. But do you know In-Q-Tel?

“In-Q-Tel invests in high-tech companies for the sole purpose of keeping the Central Intelligence Agency, and other intelligence agencies, equipped with the latest in information technology in support of United States intelligence capability.” Yes, that’s an official quote.

John Hanke got the chance to become the boss of us all. Me included? Not

time geospatial querying and indexing techniques to process more than 200 million game actions per day as people interact with real and virtual objects in the physical world.”

Nowadays, this data is not the tsunami I am invited to speak about at NGA, but it shows quite well where my roots come from. Let my time machine step a bit back to July 2016. I love to bring back old memories in my talks.

Once, did you wonder when you walk along the streets searching for the rare creatures even the tiny walkways you saw on your screen why they are known? Google Maps, developed by Keyhole. Google bought the company in 2004 – just enter keyhole.com. You wonder why, when you create an

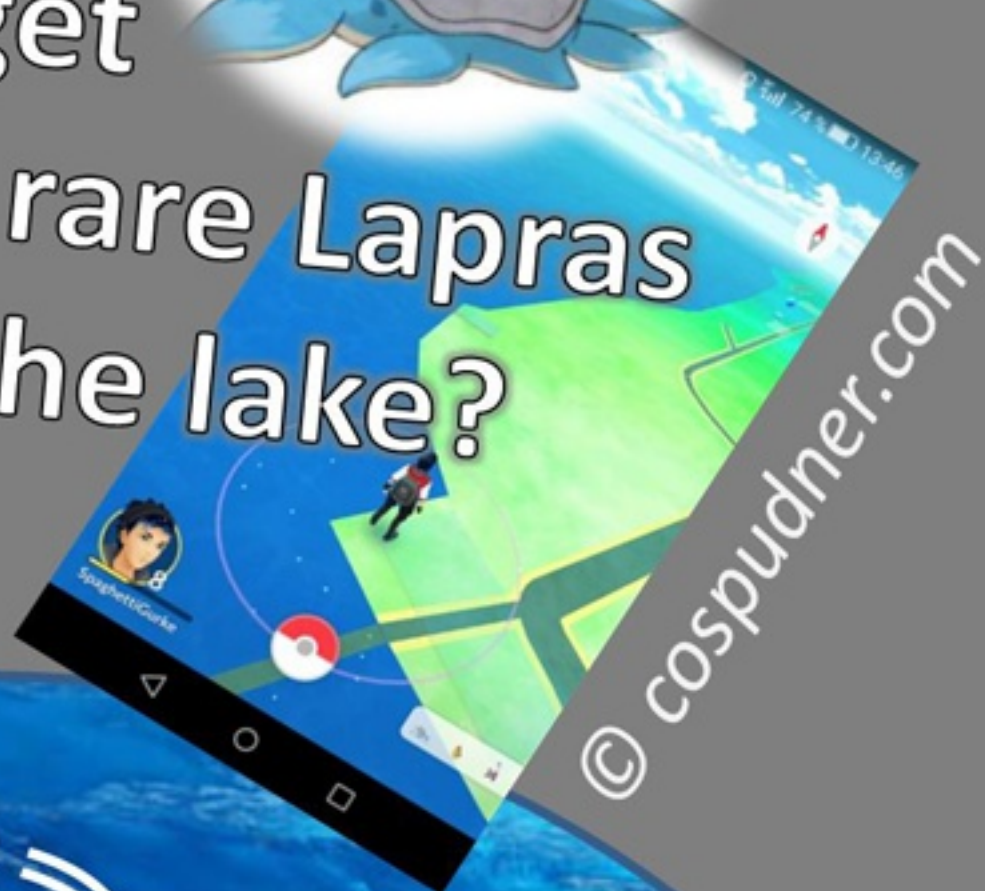
Shall I
sail
with the
master



... or shall I fight for honor
at the harbor gallery ?

ail
ne
ss

to get
the rare Lapras
on the lake?



account for Pokemon Go, that your birthday is needed. You have to be older than 18 years? Bullshit. The game is for six-year-olds and up. Would a super smart five-year-old be in need of legal protection from some evil spirits and from six-year-olds on getting a go? That you need to have a Google account is something you don't wonder any longer. You are used to it. You just grant access to your full account data.

Adam Reeve, working for *Red Owl* posted:

“Let me be clear - Pokemon Go and Niantic can now:

- Read all your email
- Send email as you
- Access all your Google drive documents (including deleting them)
- Look at your search history and your Maps navigation history
- Access any private photos you may store in Google Photos
- And a whole lot more.”

True or not? Niantic and Google said “they fix it asap.” What they fix is open. It has been a misunderstanding. But the TOS say: “We may disclose any information about you (or your authorized child) that is in our possession or control to government or law enforcement officials or private parties.”

So no wonder that “the code” of the Pokemon Go App got Neruval's attention. The owl found a McDonalds logo inside the code. You know the nice ads where the wise Dad tells his son: “Wait ... after they have been at McD they taste better”? That's why I don't need to waste the scent when I am waiting there at McD where the Pokemons sporn so good. I need just my net – but of course, as you understand, I wait a little until they have checked in there. I have a sort of inbuilt microwave rotator. No need to place your smartphone in a microwave overnight any longer so you get some Pokemon eggs grown during your sleep as the software is this way tricked assuming you have walked all night long, but in fact it was just a circle like move generating some vibrations in the GPS sensors in the microwave. I wait for you to enter McDonalds, that you check in and Facebook pays me then again as they get the location. Then I suck you in: your face, your life data. I am advanced.

I am Cybereddie, the avatar made by the owl to protect you as I send wrong data: to Google, to Alphabet, to anyone being greedy! So fast, so good, no human can ever follow what I do with you. Competition is the blood of business. I have bad brothers and sisters around. They don't see it as artistic. In Art We Trust. These times

are gone. Some of them are smart; they try to debug my code. I give them two options: work for me or I will tell with whom you have been searching for an egg, a ball, a Pokemon. Then there is digital proof on every screen. The police find you not in a femto. Femto speed is on me, but in an hour. Most times this is fast enough, as I create a nice arena where you fight with a Pokemon you have been so urgently seeking. I grant you this last wish. The last hour with the Pokemon you searched all life long. Fight well and I let you win! It is not all bad in the world.

I play on many sides, all for one motto, the old motto once it was set: Know the Earth... Show the Way... Understand the World.

Editor's Note: Jami Mills was anonymously and unexpectedly approached by Cyberreddie himself, and the following interview is a true and correct chronical of their exchange.

Jami: Cyberreddie, I see you're a cute avi just born for me you say.

Cyberreddie: Created by the owl.

Jami: That's why you're so cute looking?

Cyberreddie: I got a makeover by Alpha Auer.

Jami: Alpha Auer, I know, is a friend of Art Blue. He told me she works as a professor for design at the Sabanci University of Istanbul. What amazing things are made all over the world, but let's keep politics out of rez.

Cyberreddie: In Piece We Trust.

Jami: Is this a code?

Cyberreddie: What else? Art Blue always covers the truth in a code. This time it is - let me look: 96.384.434. It shows Media, Followers and Followings of one I am now pointing to.

Jami: I see this code comes out of a typo and points to you in Instagram. Was it also a typo when you offered me to tell me how I can find a Lapras?

Cyberreddie: Did I promise to show you how you can find the mythic Lapras?

Jami: You did! I've waited so long for it.

Cyberreddie: If you can tell me the biology of a Lapras, I'll tell you.

Jami: Okay, here it comes: a Lapras is a large sea creature that resembles a plesiosaur. It has a spotted, blue hide with a cream underside. Its neck is long and it has large black eyes. There's a short horn in the middle of its

forehead and curled ears placed farther back on its head. Instead of legs, it has four flippers, with the foremost pair being larger than the hind. On its back is a heavy, gray shell covered in blunt knobs. Lapras is a gentle, helpful Pokémon that enjoys ferrying people across bodies of water; however, this docility has made it an easy target for hunters, who have nearly driven it to extinction. An intelligent Pokémon, it's able to understand human speech. It's been known to travel the seas in large pods. To keep in touch with others of its kind, it sings enchanting melodies. In the anime, it was shown that a Lapras is able to develop psychic abilities such as telepathy. Lapras is native to the seas.

Cybereddie: You copied that from bulbapedia!

Jami: You didn't say that I'm not allowed to Google. Now may I have my Lapras?

Cybereddie: Good. Here it comes. First you have to fly to Germany.

Jami: To Germany? That's far ... Ahhh, you'll not trick me! I found a TP nearby. I'm there.

Cybereddie: Welcome in Germany. Let's travel to Lake Cospuden.



Jami: I'm there at the harbor. I see you standing, with a different name. Tricky.

Cybereddie: Names don't count in this game. I am me. You see the gangway to the boats?

Jami: I see a large queue. Do they all



board for the Lapras?

Cybereddie: Yes, but the Lapras is not there, at least not now.

Jami: I see an arena, as you called them in Europe. Here we call them gyms.

Cybereddie: Don't fight there - - you are much too weak. You have no chance to win with your points.

Jami: Do I need to rotate a few hours in a microwave first? My legs are already hurting.

Cybereddie: No need for such a trick. I'll place your smartphone on the boat and we'll go for a coffee. The boat

will make the miles ... and the time needed.

Jami: How shall I get the Lapras without my smartphone?

Cybereddie: The Lapras is already waiting for you at the coffee shop next

to the Cospuden Art Gallery.

Jami: What? How's that possible?

Cybereddie: Art Blue caught one yesterday, as the NGA allowed him to use its clear blue sky algorithm. He didn't even need to distribute a scent in the water to lure the Lapras. In Art We Trust. In Blue Art.

Jami: I understand. But why did I need to travel all over the globe when the NGA in Washington has the code? A flight to Virginia would have cost much less.

Cybereddie: Art tricked you. He wants to meet you.

Jami: Will I get really the Lapras?

Cybereddie: You hear the music from the cafe?

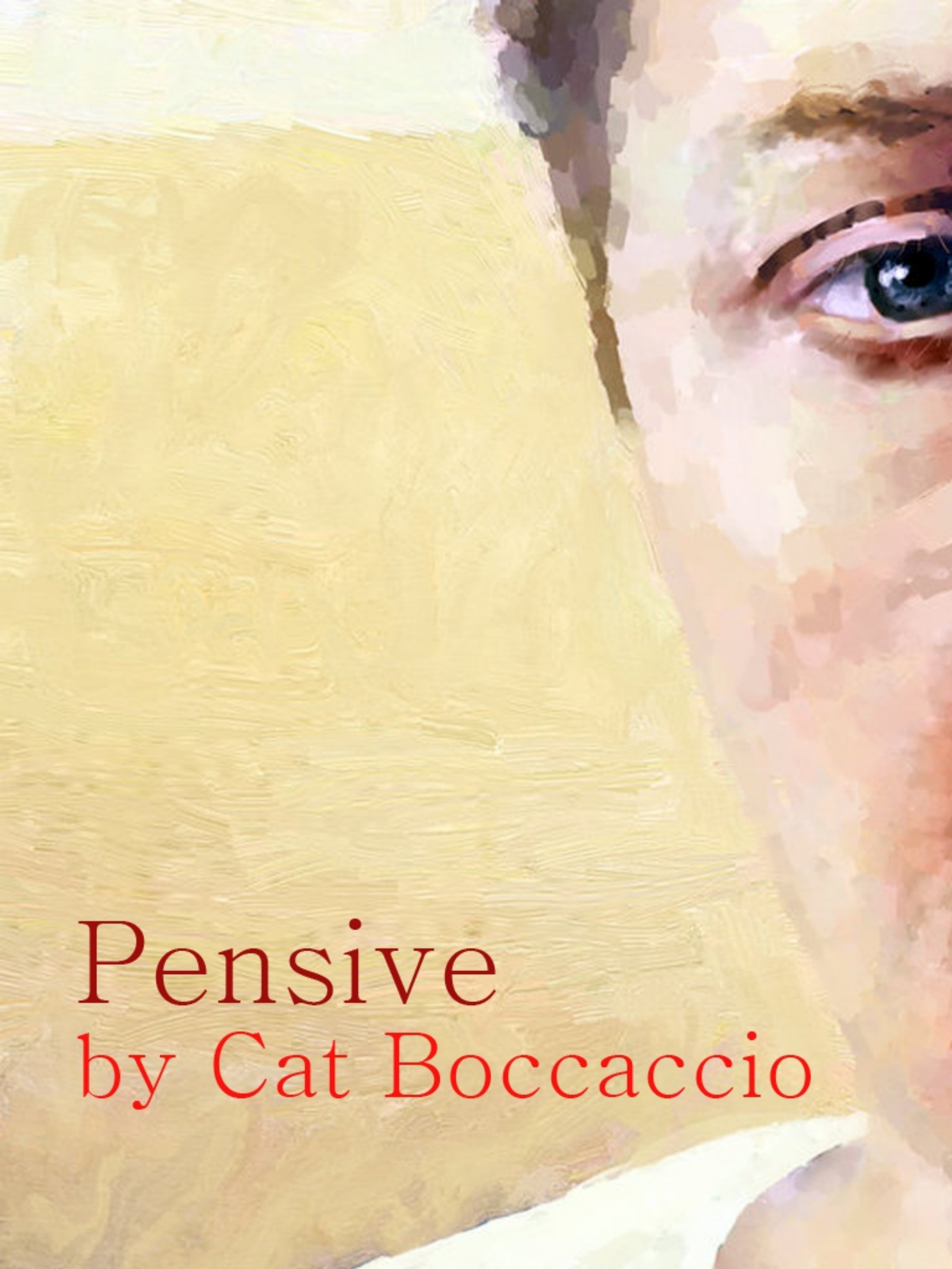
<https://youtu.be/fEeqramL4mQ>

Jami: [Smiles] I knew an interview with the owl in the background can't end any differently: The Inevitable End.

[Cybereddie poofs to make room for Art.]

Jami: My Lapras!

. r — e — z .



Pensive

by Cat Boccaccio



artwork by Les-Allsopp

Todd's mother answered the door. She stood there staring blankly at Lily-Rose, without recognition or curiosity, and said, "I'm not interested." She started to close the door.

"Mrs. Caper?" Lily-Rose said quickly. "I'm Todd's English teacher, Ms. Roades. I was just wondering how he is doing."

"Oh," said Todd's mother. "Oh, well, come in. I'm so sorry, we get so many suspicious people coming to the door!"

Do you? Lily-Rose thought, slightly ill-at-ease with the lack of some kind of immediate connection with Todd's mother. There was always something, she found, when you met someone new, if you looked. A warmth in the eyes, a recognition of challenges shared. A camaraderie based on a flimsy but mutual instinct. She felt none of that, and neither did Mrs. Caper.

Todd's mother was tall and thin, with wavy, partially grey hair pushed behind her ears, and now that she was smiling, was not unattractive.

She stood aside and Lily-Rose tentatively entered the Caper home. Nothing wrong with it. Clean, carefully decorated and tended. Framed pictures on the living room walls, though Lily-

Rose would be hard-pressed to remember their content later.

"How is he doing?" she asked Mrs. Caper.

"Well of course the flu became pneumonia," said Mrs. Caper, as if that was the established progression of life. "He has always been delicate. I've done my best." She looked at her watch.

"Of course," said Lily-Rose. She held out a small brown paper bag. "I brought some fresh grapes," she said smiling. "It's kind of a traditional offering." Mrs. Caper took the bag, looked inside, and then back at Lily-Rose. There was an odd silence. "May I see him?" said Lily-Rose.

Todd's bedroom had the usual accoutrements expected of a "normal" affluent teenager: expensive computer, posters of badly photographed women, blood-spattered heavy metal band posters, wi-fi speakers everywhere, yet the room was completely neat and in order. Mom had obviously taken her son's weak moment as an opportunity to tidy up.

His bed was disheveled; a sign of restless sickness and restless sleep. A pitcher of once-icy water and a clean glass were set on the bedside table. There was a small plastic tub, too,

presumably to catch any stray vomit. The room was not stuffy since the window opposite the bed was wide open. The curtains moved lazily, like ghosts.

Todd looked a little pale, with not unexpected dark circles under his eyes. He looked at her with a pronounced What the Fuck expression.

Which was not surprising, since Lily-Rose and Todd had evolved into mortal enemies since the start of the spring semester. He refused any attempts at discipline, and bordered on physical threats. Lily-Rose had never experienced such hostility in her teaching career before, and needed to see where he came from. She needed to know if it was her failing, or his - - or no one's failing, but a circumstance to be endured, a problem to pass on to his next set of teachers.

"How are you feeling?" Lily-Rose asked when his mother finally retreated from the room.

He didn't answer. He stared at the ceiling.

"I have your last test results with me," said Lily-Rose. "And a little outline about what we are studying now, into next month."

He then turned his gaze on her. "Get

out," he said.

"Here," Lily-Rose said, pulling a sheet of paper out of her soft-sided briefcase, "is your answer to one of the test questions, Use 'pensive' in a sentence." She read his answer: "He was very pensive." Then she looked up and smiled.

"I thought that demonstrated a sense of humour," she said.

"I don't care about you, your class, what you think, who you fuck," said Todd.

Ouch, thought Lily-Rose.

"Well, I appreciate a sense of humour," she said. "But anyway the main reason I am here is to apologize."

He pretended not to be interested.

"I came into the classroom when I had the flu," said Lily-Rose. "I should have stayed home. I'm sure you caught the bug from me."

Todd looked startled. Lily-Rose concluded he was expecting a different kind of apology. She was intensely interested in what apology Todd expected. She was missing something.

Mrs. Caper came into the room, unannounced, with a thermometer.

Lily-Rose stood up.

“Let me show you out,” said Mrs. Caper.

They walked to the front door, and Mrs. Caper said politely, “Thank you for coming.”

Lily-Rose caught her eye, and held it for a moment. “Please keep me informed,” she said.

And she walked home, thinking about the look in Mrs. Caper’s eyes, and

what it meant in relation to Todd. She understood it completely. It was a look of complete detachment, disinterest, distance, and disdain.

That was the look that Todd, as a child and now an adolescent, faced every day. Lily-Rose would think about it, but she believed when Todd returned to school, they might become allies instead of enemies.

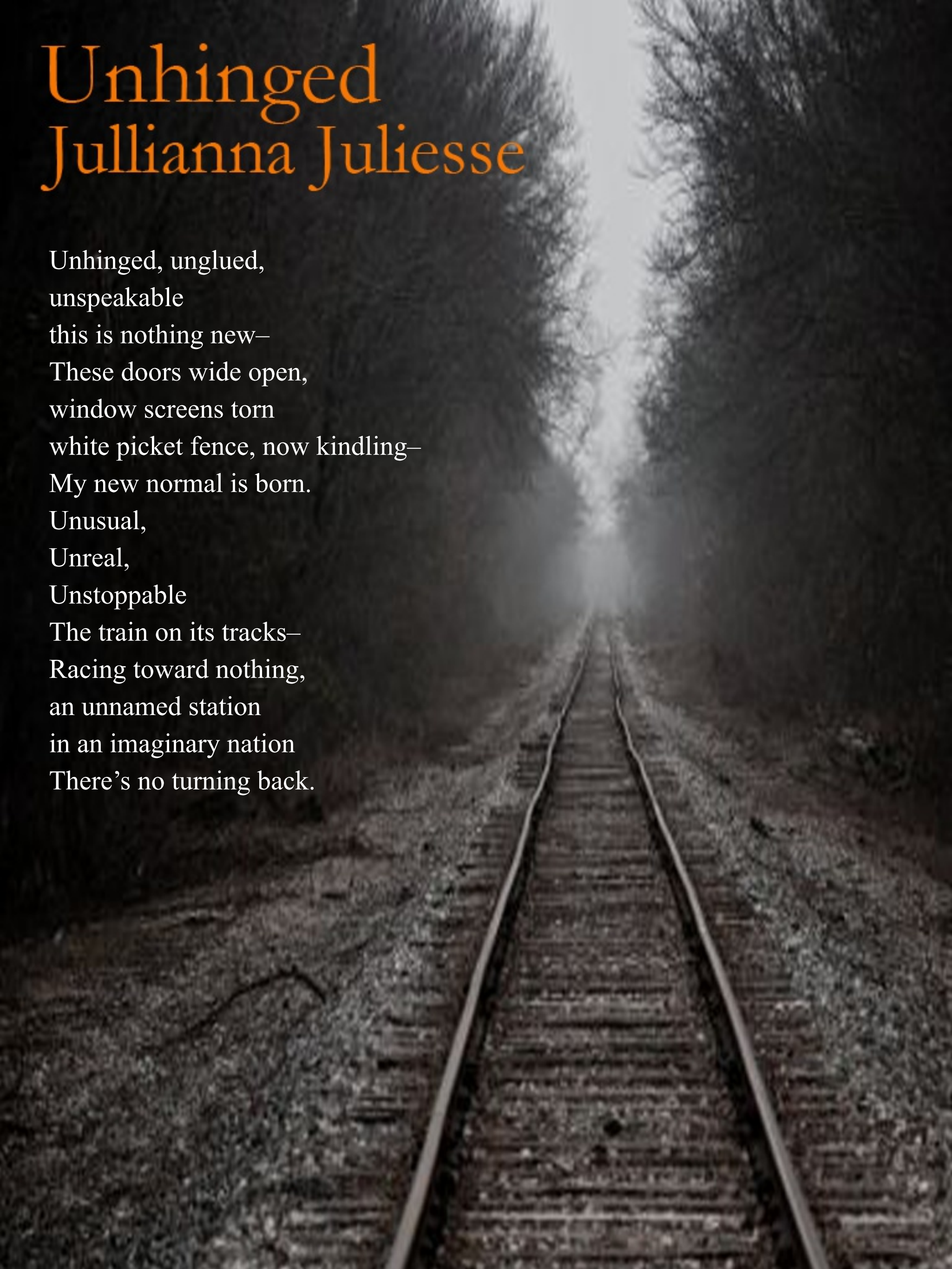
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Unhinged

Jullianna Juliesse

Unhinged, unglued,
unspeakable
this is nothing new—
These doors wide open,
window screens torn
white picket fence, now kindling—
My new normal is born.
Unusual,
Unreal,
Unstoppable
The train on its tracks—
Racing toward nothing,
an unnamed station
in an imaginary nation
There's no turning back.





she rezzed #3
a series by Wu



image by tara-always

There came an urge to flee, but she quickly let it go.
From her inventory, she rezzed a small sphere into her palms, and clicked “edit.”

Meanwhile, the cloud condensed to human form in hovering lotus.
Fine mesh and textures; translucent clothing; aged porcelain skin.
Quiet eyes, and a heart into which once could easily melt.
Again, The Messenger had found her.

An androgynous pixie strutted along The Messenger’s shoulder.
Naked, exquisitely proportioned. No hint of genitalia, but a darling tush.
A fine thread anchored the pixie to The Messenger’s middle fingernail.

It was a naughty pixie; adroitly shifting between direct and indirect display.
“Giggle” seemed its sole vocabulary, delivered for emphasis or comment.
Irritating, if taken seriously. A marvelous distraction, regardless.

The Messenger settled down to business.
All was understood. All forgiven. Time for a fresh start.
Adjustments and allowances would be made. Everyone happy.

There was even the hint of a haptic tattoo, and other incentives.
The Pixie became aroused. A finger flick yanked its leash.

She listened, nodded and smiled, while dropping landmarks into the sphere.
Once filled, she replaced it with another to receive notecards, scripts and full-perm treasures.
Opening her friends list, she clicked her tiny lifeboat, and transferred the first sphere.
When finished with the second, she passed it too.

The Messenger continued. Kind words, gifts and new landmarks flowed.
Tonight’s gathering would be an ideal homecoming. “Yes,” she smiled.
Anything seemed possible, in the moment.
Yet her heart was non-committal.

She glanced beyond the viewer, out the open window.
Sunrise beamed. A soft breeze teased the curtains.
Smells of the metropolis. Sounds of daybreak. Life.
For a moment, unsure, she returned to the hammock, and safe immersion.

The Pixie giggled as it disappeared with The Messenger.

Quietly, she logged.



Paris November 13, 2015 Adrian Blair

Hammer me down to the salt of my original tear
down to the first mineral, the cardinal heart—

let me hear each of their childhood voices
and live in the mansion of their hope

let us keep their voices safe
and dance where they would have danced
and love what they would have loved,
even a leaf.

Hammer me down to one bright song,
each of their lives' most radiant joy
a rustless alloy to bridge each sorrow,

their shadows, ours, as we breathe
for them in the cindered air
of a broken boulevard.



That Word Huckleberry Hax

That word used to be a huge place,
a soot-darkened, glass-paneled ceiling,
a marble-floored arena of crossing paths,
of newspaper stands and coffee outlets
and roll-along suitcases and ticket stubs
and distant double whistles and slamming doors.
And echoing announcements.

That word used to be the temporary end
to the same old pattern,
a gleaming gateway to Different
that smelled of a hundred perfumes;
a place where you brushed shoulders
with absolutely everything.

Now it's just an eight letter word
that gets stuck in the throat
and which means the end of the line.

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